

Top Secret

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Tuesday 28 March 1978 CG NIDC 78/072C

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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Tuesday, 28 March 1978.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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SYRIA: Leadership Changes

25X1 [] //Syrian President Asad shuffled his cabinet and military leadership yesterday. The move probably reflects Asad's effort to come to grips with some longstanding internal problems and perhaps with the domestic fallout of the Lebanese crisis. Asad continues to be the target of contradictory internal and external pressures about his policy in Lebanon.//

25X1 [] //Asad appointed the speaker of the People's Assembly, Muhammad Halabi, to replace Prime Minister Khulayfawi, who has wanted to resign for some time. [] 25X1

25X1 [] //Halabi, a member of Syria's ruling Baath Party, is a loyal Asad man with no independent power base. He has supported Syria's role in Lebanon [] 25X1

25X1 [] The Prime Minister's job is not a major decisionmaking post in Syria. A change had been expected since Asad's reelection to a second seven-year term earlier this month.// 25X1

25X1 [] //A potentially more significant move was the removal from office of Air Force Commander Naji Jamil and his principal deputy. Jamil has been a key Asad lieutenant [] 25X1

25X1 [] Damascus radio gave no explanation for Jamil's removal saying only that he would now devote his time to Baath Party matters. Jamil has been a major architect of Syria's policy in Lebanon.// 25X1

25X1 [] //If Jamil has been demoted, it would be a significant indication of unrest within Asad's inner circle. The US Embassy in Damascus reports that Asad continues to enjoy the support of the majority of the officer corps but is facing mounting internal pressure to show that his policy in Lebanon of relying on international pressure to secure Israeli withdrawal will succeed.//

25X1 [] //Asad also faces contradictory external pressure to act more forcefully in Lebanon. Iraq denounced the announcement on Friday by the Syrian peacekeeping forces in Lebanon

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prohibiting outside aid from entering Lebanon for the Palestinians. Damascus has tried to dissociate itself from that decision by labeling it a Lebanese Government policy, but this argument will persuade few Arabs. Nonetheless, Syria has apparently enforced the ban.//

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[] //The UN is encouraging Asad to use his forces in Lebanon to control the Palestinians. The UN commander in the Middle East asked Syria on Saturday to move its forces down to the Litani River to ensure Palestinian cooperation with the new UN peacekeeping force being deployed south of the river. Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam refused.//

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[] //Asad may be more willing to rein in the Palestinians once the Israelis have withdrawn from Lebanon. The leader of the Lebanese wing of the Syrian Baath Party told the US Embassy in Beirut that Asad would act once the Israelis are out of the south.//

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[] //The Israelis have informed the US defense attache in Tel Aviv that Asad has moved several Syrian-controlled Palestinian units into the region north of the Litani recently, perhaps to bring the Palestinians under Syrian supervision.

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NAMIBIA: Assassination of Kapuuo

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[] The fatal shooting of Chief Clemens Kapuuo yesterday may seriously complicate Western efforts to bring about a negotiated settlement in Namibia. Kapuuo, the traditional leader of the Herero tribe, was president of the multiracial Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, which was formed last year to compete against the South-West Africa People's Organization in any pre-independence election. SWAPO's opponents in Namibia and in South Africa very likely will blame the killing on SWAPO.

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[] Kapuuo was shot killed in Katatura--a segregated residential area for contract workers from several tribal homelands. Earlier this month several residents of Katatura were killed in rioting apparently fueled by traditional tribal animosities.

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[] Kapuuo's assailant may have been an Ovambo who decided to avenge earlier killings of Ovambos by Hereros. In any case, Kapuuo's death is likely to result in further intertribal fighting.

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[] South African Government spokesmen recently announced that South African police in Namibia had obtained a copy of SWAPO's operational plan, which calls for the assassination of tribal leaders and names Kapuuo as a prime target. The plan

apparently was drafted by guerrilla leaders meeting outside Namibia and may have been intended for contingency use--in case the South Africans held an election without concluding a truce with SWAPO.

25X1 [] The South Africans, however, assert that the plan shows SWAPO's foreign-based leaders are determined to step up terrorist operations inside Namibia instead of honoring the Western proposals for a truce and elections under UN supervision. The South Africans probably publicized the plan to strengthen their claim that the Western settlement proposal, by restricting a residual South African military force, prevents maintenance of security during an election campaign.

25X1 [] The South African Government may have publicized the plan to gain greater concessions in negotiations with the Western contact group. In the wake of Kapuuo's death, however, hardliners in Namibia and within the South African National Party may cite the plan as a reason to scuttle the negotiations.

25X1 []
DJIBOUTI: Political Maneuverings

25X1 [] *Ethnic antagonisms are threatening to flare again in Djibouti because of reports that the Issa-dominated government has ordered the arrest of prominent leaders of the rival Afar ethnic group. Ethiopia and Somalia would be likely to become involved in any Djibouti civil war. Ethiopian concern over Djibouti is reflected in a statement alleging US support for Somalia to annex the territory. The French military apparently is divided on the question of whether to keep French troops in Djibouti.*

25X1 [] According to US Embassy sources, the government has ordered the arrest on unspecified charges of Ahmed Dini, a former Prime Minister, and Barkat Gourad, a member of the National Assembly and a former senator in the French Parliament. Dini is on a tour of foreign capitals, during which he has criticized the government for showing favoritism toward the Issas; Barkat's whereabouts are unknown.

25X1 [] Prime Minister Kamil told the US Charge Sunday that he doubted an arrest order had been issued, but said it was not impossible that some other action against Dini might be contemplated by security officials.

25X1 [] Afar political leaders believe the arrest of Dini would be an act of political repression against the Afars and would lead to civil war between the Afars and Issas.

25X1 [] Ethiopia and Somalia are almost certain to become involved if ethnic fighting breaks out in Djibouti. The Afars would look to Ethiopia for support and the Issas to Somalia. Each country has already provided arms and training to its ethnic surrogates in Djibouti.

25X1 [] Ethiopia is trying to win support among the Issas by adopting a conciliatory policy toward the Issas living in Ethiopia's Ogaden region. The Ethiopians have appointed the spiritual leader of the Issas as governor of an "autonomous" Issa zone. Issas in Djibouti and parts of northern Somalia also recognize his religious suzerainty.

25X1 [] Despite the close ties of Gouled and other Djibouti Issas to Somalia, the Issas as a whole probably feel less loyal to Mogadiscio than do other Somali clans. The Ethiopians hope to encourage Issa disaffection and create trouble for President Siad in Djibouti and northern Somalia.

25X1 [] The Ethiopian Foreign Ministry on Sunday accused the US of scheming to assist Somalia in creating disorder in Djibouti to provide a pretext for Mogadiscio to intervene and annex the territory. As evidence of US collusion, the Ethiopians cited President Carter's failure to mention Djibouti in his recent statement calling on Somalia to respect Kenyan and Ethiopian frontiers and also mentioned Assistant Secretary Moose's recent talks with President Siad in Mogadiscio.

25X1 [] The Foreign Ministry statement may exaggerate the Ethiopian position. The US Charge in Addis Ababa believes the statement is the work of officials in the government who do not wish to see an improvement in US-Ethiopian relations. These officials may have taken advantage of Chairman Mengistu's absence to act on their own.

25X1 [] Ethiopia, however, will probably continue to highlight alleged Somali designs on Djibouti in order to provide a pretext for Ethiopia to pursue a more aggressive policy of attempting to establish its hegemony over Djibouti.

25X1 [] the French military is intensely debating the future of French troops in Djibouti. [] some believe that French troops should be withdrawn as soon as possible, before they are forced out in humiliation. Proponents of this view believe the Ethiopian threat to Djibouti will increase now that Addis Ababa has regained control of the Ogaden. 25X1 DIA

25X1 [] Opponents of this strategy point out that Djibouti occupies a strategic location and that the French have an obligation to support the Djibouti Government. They assert that a continued French presence in Djibouti will signal France's resolve to other former French colonies in Africa.

25X1 [] French military personnel in Djibouti may be reduced slightly even if no formal decision to withdraw is made. An airborne artillery unit numbering about 100 men that was on temporary assignment in Djibouti was not replaced after returning to France at the end of its tour of duty. [] 25X1

YUGOSLAVIA-USSR: Horn of Africa

25X1 [] Yugoslavian Foreign Minister Minic left yesterday for Moscow in an apparent effort to convince Soviet President Brezhnev of the need to reduce the Soviet-Cuban troop presence in Ethiopia. Minic carries a personal message to Brezhnev from President Tito; he may also provide some briefing on Tito's recent visit to the US.

25X1 [] The day before Minic's departure, Milika Sundic, a knowledgeable Zagreb radio commentator, suggested that a Yugoslav appeal for Soviet-Cuban withdrawal was in the making. Sundic noted that Moscow has "an opportunity" to make a significant contribution toward peace between Somalia and Ethiopia.

He argued that an attempt to set up a permanent Soviet military presence in Ethiopia would endanger the "military lull" in the Horn of Africa.

25X1 [] The Yugsolavs probably have no illusions that they will succeed in Moscow but feel that a gesture is required. Tito hosts the nonaligned foreign ministers' conference in July, where sharp opposition to Soviet-Cuban activities in Africa is likely to surface. Tito wants to show that Yugoslavia disagrees strongly with Soviet attempts to establish control over non-aligned countries. []

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BRIEFS

USSR

25X1 [] Soviet First Deputy Defense Minister Marshal S. L. Sokolov will visit Mozambique in the near future, according to a Mozambican radio broadcast. Sokolov will probably discuss Soviet military aid to Mozambique and to Rhodesian insurgents operating out of Mozambique.

25X1 [] Recent Soviet efforts concerning Rhodesia have focused on Mozambique. []

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25X1 [] Sokolov visited Angola earlier this year. He may have met with ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo, who was on his way to the Malta conference on Rhodesia via Luanda, Havana, and Moscow.

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Pakistan

25X1 [] Two of Pakistan's leading politicians--Abdul Wali Khan and former Air Force Commander Asghar Khan--apparently have rejected Chief Marshal Law Administrator Zia-ul-Haq's offer to assist in forming a new government. Asghar was a

dominant figure in the agitation last year against former Prime Minister Bhutto; Wali was the most important opposition figure until Bhutto jailed him in 1975.

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[] Zia could still go ahead with his proposal to create a government in which most political parties would participate if the eight-party anti-Bhutto alliance, to which Wali's party belongs, decides to support him. Without Asghar, Wali, and presumably the bulk of Bhutto's supporters, however, Zia would not have the broad-based government he needs. []

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Romania-Israel

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[] Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan will arrive in Bucharest on 2 April for a two-day visit, the first high-level contact between the two governments since Prime Minister Begin's trip to Romania last August. The Israelis are probably anxious to fill Ceausescu in on the latest developments in the Middle East before he departs for the US in early April.

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[] Dayan's trip comes in the wake of strong Romanian condemnation of the Israeli attack on Palestinian bases in southern Lebanon. The Romanians described the Israeli move as "aggression" and called for immediate and total withdrawal of all Israeli forces from the area.

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[] Ceausescu no doubt believes that the Israeli action in Lebanon complicates his relations with the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact loyalists who broke relations with Tel Aviv in 1967. Dayan is likely to try to soothe Romanian feelings. []

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